What ~~is~~ Are We - Really?

Normally, it has became the practice at any session to wait patiently for Shri Maharaj to start the discussions. Sometimes, he starts talking on a definite subject; at other times, he sits silently with his eyes closed for quite some time and then begins to mumble softly, perhaps thinking aloud; then again, he might, at the very beginning ask the visitors if any of them has any questions. ~~Sometimes~~, there happens to be a visitor amongst the gathering who is extremely keen to ask a particular question concerning a specific problem, Shri. Maharaj seems to sense his anxiety ~~even~~ of this visitor, ~~and he looks~~, looks directly at him even ~~he~~ if he happens to be sitting in a far corner, and asks if any one has any questions to ask.

One morning, hardly had ~~as soon as~~ Shri Maharaj finished putting such an invitation into words, one very eager visitor put his hand up and started speaking: he said, "Shri Maharaj, I have a question which has been troubling me so much that I am at my wits' end. It is this. I have done a fair amount of reading on the subject of advaita, and the basis of advaita affects me very deeply indeed. I am told repeatedly by different masters that unless I give up the concept of ~~an~~ a separate entity, there cannot be any liberation. My specific difficulty is this: I accept that the one who is bound by the concept of duality - self and the other - is the one that is bound; and yet I am told also that there can be no one who could even be bound because he is always been unbounded! I cannot 'do' anything because ~~there is supposed~~ + no entity is supposed to exist. How do I carry on in this world. Please understand Shri Maharaj, ~~I~~ this is not an idle, academic question. I am deeply concerned, and the problem is driving me mad ~~I~~. What are we - really?!"

Shri Maharaj fixed his luminous gaze into the visitor's eyes which, by then, were filled with tears overflowing on to his cheeks. He took a deep breath, sat for a ~~moment or two~~ while with his eyes closed, - a pose

which must have automatically induced a similar sense of peace within the visitor who also sat there with his eyes closed. When Shri Maharaj opened his eyes, and he found the visitor sitting there with his eyes closed. After a few moments, the visitor opened his eyes and found Shri Maharaj smiling at him.

"Well," said Shri Maharaj, "What were you thinking during the last few minutes?" The answer was: "nothing".

"That" said Shri Maharaj, "is the answer - NOTHING." When you said 'nothing' what exactly did you mean? Did you not mean that the conceptualisation which goes on all the time in consciousness had temporarily ceased, as it does when you are in deep sleep? Does it not strike you, therefore, that the culprit is this consciousness which is the source of all conceptualisation? Does it not, therefore, strike you that the problem has been created in consciousness and it is this consciousness which is trying to understand its own nature? Does it not strike you, therefore, that it would be virtually impossible for you to understand conceptually what-we-are?"

"Now then, let us proceed. You used the 'really': what are we 'really'? The average person would use the word "really" to mean something that is perceptible to the senses. The body is perceptible to the senses but would the body be "really" you? We must use the words - with all their limitation - correctly. We consider as 'real' anything that is perceptible to the senses, and yet every imaginable 'thing' that is sensorially perceptible must pass through an interpretation by the mind before it is cognised, and anything that is thus cognised is obviously only an appearance in the consciousness of the cognisor. If whatever is sensorially perceptible is only an appearance, where then is the reality of the physical form which seems so very tangible?!

"Should we not then go further back - even conceptually - to that state prior to the appearance of this physical form, this psycho-somatic apparatus, prior even to the conception of this physical form? If I ask

you to tell me something about your state before you were conceived in your mother's womb, your answer must necessarily be 'I don't know'. This 'I' who does not know that state – in fact the 'I' who knew nothing until consciousness appeared – that is what we all are: the Absolute, the Noumenon – spaceless, timeless, imperceptible BEING; whereas, relatively-phenomenally – finite, time-bound, sensorially perceptible is what we APPEAR to be as separate objects.

"The state of non-manifestation – Noumenon – is one where we – strictly, the word should be 'I' – do not even know of our beingness: as soon as we become conscious of our beingness, the state of unicity no longer prevails, because the very essence of consciousness is duality. The manifestation of that-which-we-are as phenomena entails a process of objectivisation which is necessarily based on a dichotomy into a subject which is the perceiver or the cogniser and an object which is the perceived or the cognised.

"The interesting point about this process of objectivisation is that it must necessarily take place in consciousness which is the source, the base of all conceptualising, and therefore in effect both the so-termed cogniser/subject and the cognised/objects are BOTH objects phenomenalised in consciousness – dream-figures. BUT that object which cognises the cognised object (as an object) assumes the identity of the subject as a separate entity – a 'self' – and gives the cognised object an identity as 'the other'. Thus is born the concept of the 'individual' through illusion, the power of the Maya, or what have you as any other name?

"Once this identification with a supposed separate entity takes place, the concept of duality gets broadened and the conditioning becomes stronger. The separate subject entity then sets itself up as a judge to compare the various objects, and the whole scheme of inter-related opposites comes into existence – good and bad, likes and dislikes, big and small, far and near – by

means of which he can discriminate and judge.

"The sub-stratum of the entire creation of this phenomenal universe is, of course, the concept of space-time. Space is needed for objectivisation and time to measure this extension in space as duration. Without space-time how could objects have been extended to become visible, and without time, how could they have been perceived? ~~Objects~~

"Now," Shri Maharaj asked the visitor, "have you got the answer to your question?"

The visitor who was listening to Shri Maharaj with rapt attention, as if mesmerised, suddenly realised that Shri Maharaj had asked him a question. He was so overwhelmed by what had been imparted to him that, for quite some time, he could not utter a word. He kept nodding his head, his hands folded together in a gesture of gratitude, his eyes full with tears of gratitude.

Shri Maharaj continued: "From what I have said, you should be able to say exactly where the pinch of the so-called bondage arises and whom it hurts. Understand this very clearly. Manifestation of phenomena is nothing but ~~a process of~~ the FUNCTIONING ~~of~~ of the process of objectification where there is no question of an individual entity. All are objects - dream figures - functioning in their respective roles. Our miseries ~~through~~ arise solely through accepting responsibility - taking 'delivery' of our respective dream roles as our own - by identifying what-we-are with the subject-cognizer element in the process of objectification! It is this illusory and totally unnecessary identification which causes the 'bondage' and all the resulting misery.

"Once again, understand the position: what-we-are-not is only a concept and this concept is seeking what-we-are. ~~What-we-are can never have any~~ ~~is changeless, infinite and imperceptible. The bondage is~~

The conditioning - the misunderstanding - can only be got rid of by a proper understanding of what-we-are and what-we-are-not. It will then be clear that the 'bondage' ~~can only~~ and the 'individual' who suffers thereby are both only concepts, and that what-we-are - noumenon - can only manifest itself as TOTAL phenomena. You will find peace - or, rather, peace will find itself - when it is finally appreciated that that we are ~~looking~~ searching for cannot be found ~~because~~ for the very simple reason that that which is ~~looking~~ searching and that which is sought are not different! The eye can see everything except itself!!